

Sardya
Pa Kida i

/3 cont. /

648 On the Rio Demini, slightly below the Cachoeira (rapids)

• 484 Auatsinaua, is the Indian protection post "Ajuricaba" (Ill. 1).

From the mouth to that point is a six-day journey in a small boat

161 with a four-horsepower outboard motor. On this long stretch

198 there are only two dozen families. Fifty years ago the banks

along the lower third were more densely settled than they are

164 today. But malaria and a terrible beriberi epidemic, 1907/08,

165 carried off the majority of the inhabitants. After the great forest fire which raged along the Demini in 1926, health conditions

648 improved temporarily. In the most recent times a motor boat

164 of the National Malaria Service travels up the Demini and Aracá once a year, and the palm-straw huts of the inhabitants are sprayed with DDT. Nevertheless, malaria still takes its toll. Often it also leads to a protracted liver ailment; above all, there is a

164 lack of any kind of medication. A second scourge is tuberculosis,

262 the cause of which, aside from the humid, hot climate, may probably be traced to the poor and unbalanced diet. It consists predominantly of manioc meal, small fish, the salted, sun-dried meat of the pirarucu, salted wild-pig meat, and, to a considerably smaller extent, birds and game, for the men generally do not have time to hunt. In addition, /4/ for rubber and palm-fiber gatherers, fruit and vegetables are practically unknown luxuries.

164 As a result of the crowded life of the individual families and the lack of hygiene, children too are not free from tuberculosis.

Moreover, mention must be made of a dangerous eye infection which often leads to blindness. This comes about because a fine dust is constantly trickling down from the palm-straw roofs of the huts, in which there are many insects, and it gets into the eyes of the people asleep in their hammocks. An infectious skin disease that causes light spots on the skin is also widespread. Worm and intestinal ailments occur frequently, as does syphilis. Finally, it is noteworthy that adults and children have very poor teeth.

[162] The reason for this may again probably be sought in the unbalanced diet, for all of the free Forest Indians who have more variety in

165 their meals, have excellent teeth. Mortality is highest among the children, and next come the women, a relatively large number of whom die in childbirth since there is, of course, no medical assistance.

Surára
Pakidái

/16 cont./

342 In the building method described by me, however, the
 174 circular ground-plan is retained, in spite of the three center posts.
 177 According to Koch-Grünberg, the gable roofs and huts with elliptical
 ground-plan and others of a square shape owe "their origin obvi-
 (114) ously to European influence" (57). On this point I am in com-

57. Koch-Grünberg, 1923a, p. 22.

plete agreement with the above-mentioned investigator and
 therefore believe that this maloka built by the Surára, which they
 modeled after the community house of the Xiríña, actually
 developed from the Karaiben conical-roofed hut, while the roof
 represents a borrowing from the civilized world (palm-straw huts
 of the caboclos). This is also indicated by the construction
 of the chief's hut within the periphery of the large, open maloka,
 (184) which likewise has a gable roof (see p. 29). It is noteworthy,
 however, that the maloka of the Surára has a height of ten
 meters, while the round huts mentioned by Koch-Grünberg show
 342 a height between 4.20-5.57 meters (58). My question as to why
 825

58. Koch-Grünberg, 1923a, p. 21.

the Surára in the sierra occupy an open maloka and on the
 Cachoeira dos Índios on the upper Aracá a closed one was answered
 to the effect that in the higher, cooler region between Demini
 and Aracá there are practically no mosquitoes, whereas there
 are relatively many along the riverbank of the Aracá. This ex-
 planation is very plausible, for in the closed community-houses
 of the Indians there are no gnats. They avoid the semidarkness
 and the smoke of the constantly burning fire.

2. Bridges

501 Boats are not used by the Surára and Pakidái. When, on
 ● 484 their narrow forest paths which are scarcely discernible to our
 491 eyes, they come to brooks, they simply wade across. In the
 case of wider brooks which are greatly swollen during the rainy

Surára
Pakida:

/16 cont./

- 484 season, or in case their banks are steep, a tree trunk is simply
491 laid across as a footbridge. To cross small rivers, for example,
the Rio Deminisinho, a left tributary of the upper Aracá which
empties into it one kilometer beyond the Cachoeira dos Índios,
the Surára even use a regular bridge. The Rio Deminisinho is 38
meters wide at the place where it is crossed, and on either side
499 there are steep banks eight meters high. The bridge, which was
built here during the summer, when the riverbed was relatively
shallow, consists of 12 crossed tree-trunks 12-14 meters long,
which were rammed into the riverbed. Over the places where
they crossed, two thinner trunks were laid next to each other and
fastened with liana lashings. At the projecting ends of the sup-
porting posts, lianas form a sort of railing. Since they hang very
loosely, however, they can scarcely offer a grip. To secure the
bridge, both ends have been additionally anchored to thick trees
by means of lianas. Because of this, the construction looks like
a hanging bridge at first glance. Since it is one meter higher
than the banks, however, small rung-ladders 60 centimeters wide
are attached at either side and fastened with liana lashings.

- 484 While I always had to fight with great difficulty to keep my
491 balance in crossing this and other tree-trunk bridges, the Indians,
men, women, and children, always strode across effortlessly,
[481] even when they were carrying a great deal of baggage. This may
be connected with the fact that they hardly place their feet out-
ward at all, so that one might almost believe them parallel (Ill.
17) (59).

[114]
[141]

59. There are similar accounts by Crevaux with regard to the Oiana /Oyana/ (Rukuén /Rucuyen/, Rouconyennes). The investigator sought the reasons for this and believed he found them in the pelvis. The white women, too, he said, more than the men, walk with their feet placed inward, because their pelvis is wider. On account of the foot position, he concludes that the Indians also have a wider pelvis (Crevaux, 1875, p. 255).

Surára
Pakidái

/25 cont./

372

411

184

114

119.(cont.)

für
Vorgeschichte
tion 56. 15. 3a
sumably the
is likewise
among the
statements
Zerries and
yet been

Volkerkund und
(Boeldecke Collec-
and b), and pre-
fire-making apparatus
fastened to the quiver
Waiká. Definite
about this by
Schuster have not
made.

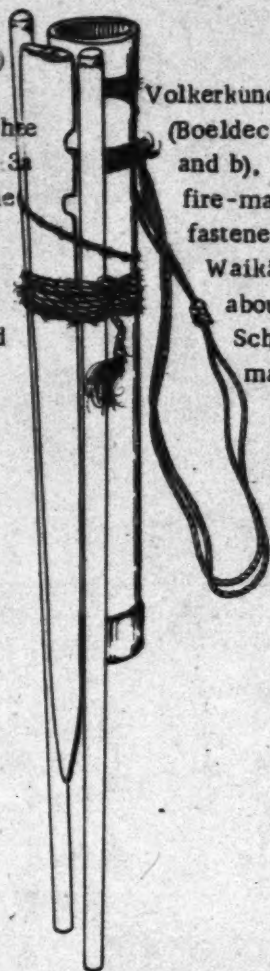


Fig. 5. Bamboo quiver with fire-drill apparatus tied on.

372 Nevertheless,

[484] it is perfectly obvious, for if the Surára and Pakidái men on war and hunting expeditions are unable to return to the maloka in the evening, they are able to kindle a fire along the way in three to four minutes. To do this a man in a squatting position holds the hearth on the ground with one foot and drills with the palms of his hands (Ill. 31). The holes of the hearth are previously bored with a knife made of the sharp tooth of the cutia (Dasyprocta aguti L.) (see P. 116) and are 1/26/connected with a small groove at the side.

[412]

[237]

Surára

/60 cont./

622 Since that time Hewemão has been chief and at the same time,
159 like his predecessor, a medicine man who instructs all the male
Surára in religion, mythology, magic, curing the sick, and tribal
traditions (see pp. 143f.). He also, however, assigns them to oc-
casional communal projects, supervises their activity in the roças
(forest clearings), gives instructions for the building of a maloka,
and selects the participants for curing the sick and for magic per-

[224] formances. If a large animal was killed, a tapir, for example,
he supervised the fair distribution of the meat so that every
family obtained its piece. In the case of smaller game, the
hunters usually give their chief a choice piece, and the women
bring him and his family fruits and berries or brimming calabashes
[554] of refreshing palm drinks. He is thus honored in every way.
He and his wives too, however, willingly and freely give up some
of their hunting or gathering spoils.

[342] In the large, open maloka he and his two wives and chil-
dren occupy a special hut (see pp. 24 ff.). During migrations of
622 the tribe he determines when they are to rest and to set out again.
484 Moreover, each morning he arranges for regular march-protection,
159 4-5 warriors who form the advance guard and set out two hours
484 before the departure. They have only their bows and arrows with
them and reconnoiter in both directions from the Indian path, in
order to be on the lookout for enemies. The bulk of the tribe,
which travels in single-file formation, always presented the
following picture during the time I lived among the Surára: 3-4
484 warriors armed only with bows and arrows. They carry their
482 weapons longitudinally over their heads or over one shoulder.

After them came men with my baggage, the younger brothers of
the chief, and finally the latter himself. I walked behind him,
my servant Mateus followed me, and the boys and girls with little
baskets, then the women with their large, cylindrical baskets,
which contain all the household goods. Mothers with babies
carried them, in addition, in a carrying band on their left hips.
On top of the basket there often sat a little dog, a monkey, or a
parrot. Then behind the women there marched 4-5 more warriors
as a rear guard.

Surára
Pakidai

/60 cont./

484 These safety measures are necessary, for one must always be prepared for a hostile attack. That is why the /61/ women [482] carry all the household goods, for if the men were thus burdened, they could not defend themselves. For this reason, the chief 484 and his brothers always march in the middle of the tribe, for in 622 the event of a military encounter the protection of the chief is the 554 supreme command of all the Surára. He is honored and respected, of course, not only as the head of the tribe, but also because he is the adviser in all situations of life, the medicine man who is able to make connections with the hekura and serras /sierras/ (see pp. 200/201) and can ward off sickness and misfortune. If he were killed, the tribe would suddenly be in a terrible situation, for his successor does not yet have the same experience.

622 The next youngest brother and subsequent successor of Hewemão is Kurikayawō. He will be followed by Inxinemá, who is approximately 19 years old, but has not yet completed his youth-initiation. And it is only after the latter that Hemahemá, who is approximately 25 years old and the only son of the oldest brother, Xarimá, who died eight years ago, would be able to take over the leadership.

624 The war chief of the Surára is Xomirawō, a modest, reserved, but extraordinarily hardy and brave man.

622 Among the Pakidái the succession of chiefs is the same. 624 The following remarks, however, will show the complications that 619 arose six years ago as a result of the death of the old chief Karakarawō, because his three younger brothers who could have taken over the succession died before him. Karakarawō did have a son, Karenauō, but he was still very young, so that there was nothing to do but to entrust the leadership of the tribe for the time being to the war chief Poréhiwō as a substitute. At the same time he and the older Pakidái men asked the chief of the friendly Surára, Hewemão, for advice in many things, especially serious illnesses, magic performances, etc. At this time many younger Pakidái attended the school of the Surára chief, among them the present Pakidái chief, Karenauō, who was given a very thorough training by Hewemão. For this reason the Surára and Pakidái even lived

Surāra
Pakidai

/65 cont. /

524 child" or "married couple." In the latter game sexual activity
524 is already often involved. As long as the children have not yet
864 reached puberty, the adults laugh about it. It is only the mothers
of girls who are a little annoyed when they hear about it. They
do not regard it as tragic, however, since they themselves were
reprimanded about it by their mothers when they were little girls.

/66/

582 g) Marriage

585 At the age of 7-8 a girl as a rule has already been given in
marriage. The husband is usually 8-10 years older. They do not
as yet lead a regular married life, however. During the day the
little girl plays with other children, and only at night does she sleep
[833] in her hammock beside her husband. Sexual intercourse, however,
is strictly forbidden until after the second menstruation. She also
[593] fetches firewood and water and receives prepared food for herself
and her husband from her family. When the tribe is on the march,
• [484] she carries the hammock of her spouse and the few household
articles. Economic reasons are connected with this marriage in
childhood, for the young husband must hunt for his little wife and
606 her parents. Especially noteworthy is the reserve toward in-laws
which operate in such a way that son-in-law and mother-in-law never
582 speak to each other and may not visit each other. Since the fear
of incest is very great in both tribes, a marriage, which is always
agreed upon by the parents, may be entered into only by partners
who are not related by kinship. For this reason young wives are
preferably obtained from a friendly tribe; in this case, however,
the young man must live there until his wife has put her second
583 menstruation behind her. Occasionally young girls and women are
abducted from hostile tribes. They are first held as captives and
prostitutes for some time, however, before a man may finally
marry them. I met such a little female captive among the Surāra.
She came from the hostile tribe of the Karauaterf and was approxi-
mately 15 or 16 years old.

Guahibo SC 14

Yabarana SS 22

Panare SS 21

/11 cont./

Sanema

Saliva SS 15

Makiritare SS 20

Y
101
133

All these basins, without exception, pour their great volumes of water into the Orinoco, which, like a gigantic arc, runs across the north of the Escudo de Guayana, thus enclosing all the native tribes studied here and marking the farthestmost boundary and end of their primitive world (cf. ethnic map /see p. 5 /). /12/ /Map appears here. /

Y
133
487

/13/ It is interesting to point out that the extensive fluvial network of the Orinoco-Ventuari zone does not serve the majority of the tribes as a means of communication or as an outstanding source of food. The Panare of the basin of the Cuchivero do not travel by river, and on the Cuchivero we found only one dugout /bongo/, which was used solely for crossing the river. In general the curiara /dugout canoe/ seems to be a foreign element in Panare culture, introduced recently by the Creoles. Nor did the Yabarana of the basin of the Ventuari use the curiara, and they recently learned from their neighbors, the Makiritare, the art of making them. For the Sanema the river represents an obstacle rather than a means of communication, and they use rafts in order to cross it. At the present time, only the groups who live in symbiosis with the Makiritare make curiaras, but there is not the slightest doubt that this industry was adopted recently. The Sanema spend less time at fishing than do the Panare, Yabarana, and Guahibo, since the latter too are among those Indians oriented toward the land, with its roads, rather than toward the rivers and navigation. The only real voyagers of the Orinoco-Ventuari zone are the Piaroa and the Makiritare, and the fame of the latter exceeds that of the former.

Y
Ya
P
226
M
487
484

M

101

Culturally, the Makiritare belong to a Neo-Indian level, as do their cousins of the same linguistic affiliation, the Panare and the Yabarana. It is interesting, however, to call attention to the fact that to speak of Caribe /Carib/ Indians is not the same eo ipso as speaking of voyaging Indians. There are Neo-Indians who are ignorant of the curiara and who developed agriculture, not in a Meso-Indian culture (of fishermen and voyagers), but basically on top of a Paleo-Indian culture (of hunters). Meso-Indian cultures, such as that of the Warao, for example, and possibly that of the Piaroa, represent a specialization of the Paleo-American who was

[Text continues on p. 4]

/187 cont. /

105

181
241
245
264

The Guatka (Waika) are considered by the above-mentioned author as "the natives with the most primitive and wild life of all those inhabiting the great region of the Venezuelan Guayana..." They have an incipient agriculture; they cultivate bananas and plantains as the principal basis of their diet, which they complement with the fruit of the pijiguo palm. They practice endocannibalism, consuming the bones of the cremated dead.

286
342
411
491
411

Their hammocks are knotted, their houses are triangular, and they use bows and arrows of various types, according to their uses. They keep the bones of many animals, travel by land, very rarely by water, and build bridges similar to the style of the Guaharibo (Sanemá).

361
241
484
434
411

/188/ Regarding the Shirianna (Casapare), Montoya says (1958) that "the real Shirianna live on the banks of river, building very stable settlements and devoting themselves to an agriculture already relatively advanced." They obtain curiaras from the Mayoncon, but have also learned to make their own, although in a rudimentary way. They use bows and arrows for hunting, but "above everything else, they are traders and travelers. They constantly travel into Brazil, leaving from the upper Paragua, using the route of the Shoropae River, Uraricuera and Parima, to Boavista." They differ from the other natives of the Paragua basin in that they are tall and strong, healthy, and well nourished.

142
146

114

101

The last report on the Yanoama of the northeast was published by Gheerbrandt (1955, pp. 345-349), and in this report there appears for the first time the name Kaserapai, which must be an orthographic variation of the name Casapare which we use to designate a whole subtribe and not only a local group as the above-named author has done.

101

114

648

Navigating the Uraricuera in the year 1950, Gheerbrandt met and heard of various Yanoama groups with different names. Very near the Sierra Marutani he came upon the Guadema on the left bank of the river named. The Guadema were very much afraid of the Kaserapai, who had killed the majority of the Guadema and were in open conflict with Waikas and Waitchas on the Uraricuera. It is possible that this may be a reference to an encounter between Sanemá, Waika, and Casapare groups, but the extent data offer no certainty in this regard.

X /190 cont. /

648 thanks to their firearms. It seems that, as a result of this incident, the Makiritare and the northern group of the Sanemá lived together more peaceably, and today it is rare to find a Makiritare settlement in that zone of the Ventuari, Erebató, and Caura, without a few Sanemá groups in the immediate vicinity.

X
77
648 The clash of the two cultures began a process of progressive acculturation, and the hunters and gatherers of wild plants adopted a superior culture: from then on they would be agriculturalists. Furthermore, the genetic constitution of the two tribes underwent profound changes, and that of the minority group will perhaps be absorbed by the Sanemá in a relatively short period of time.

M
[628]
Y
[502] This process of acculturation and genetic absorption is interesting, for one is in the habit of thinking that the Caribe have always been the victorious and dominant invaders. But in this concrete case the process seems to be working in the opposite direction. The advance of the Sanemá, who adopted, among other things, the art of navigation, has brought about the isolation of the two large Makiritare groups: the Yecuana (Decuana) of the Ventuari and Caura on the one hand, and the Cunuhana of the Cunucunuma on the other. Prior to this, these two groups used to visit each other frequently, their members were related to each other, and strong family ties existed between them. At the present time the Makiritare youths know only partially the rivers and routes of those regions traveled so many times by their fathers, and they travel in small groups, overcome with deep anguish every time that they have to cross the zone occupied by the Sanemá. What was observed on the trip on the upper Ventuari fully confirmed this opinion for us, for there is not the least doubt but that the Makiritare captain, who, together with our five traveling companions, had fought eight years previously against the Sanemá, felt ill at ease on leaving the Makiritare rancherías behind, and his nervousness suddenly increased when one day we came upon a Sanemá raft on the bank of the river. They could not hide their nervousness when inland, in the selva, we came across a conuco and seven houses recently vacated. They always

M
Y
648
● [484]

/201 cont. /

342

The two windscreens had two posts stuck superficially into the ground at a distance of two meters apart. Contiguous to the post there was a smaller stake tied to it with a bejuco. The roof of this screen was covered with interlaced branches and roofed with platanillo leaves and supported with a slight inclination against two posts. The roof projects from the posts some 40 centimeters and touches the ground at its lower edge. In these houses the Sanemá hang their hammocks of bejuco or majagua. In some ranchos we found vestiges of fire.

[352]

177

342

The houses of Makiritare type (rectangular or oblong) are small-scale imitations and have only one room. The roofs, made of palm leaves, are of two rectangular slopes and are raised on four or six posts. The edges of the roof are straight or rounded. The walls consist of bark or juxtaposed sticks. They have an average dimension of four meters long by two meters wide and approximately three high. Each house has one or two quite narrow doors. Within the house (of the Makiritare type) the greatest disorder reigns: from the roof and from the walls hang baskets, gourds, weapons, leather bags, tobacco, palm fruit, hammocks /chinchorros/ of bejuco, majagua, and cotton. On the floor there are hearths, firewood, cooking utensils, guapas with spindle and cotton, yuca graters, dogs, and children, all in confusion without order or arrangement. It is clear that they are not used to living under a roof, and the house is a place for storing things rather than a habitation.

353
[197]

105

422

● 484

The technology of the Sanemá is very little-developed, and precisely for this reason one can classify the Sanemá (and the Yanoama in general) as representatives of the most backward peoples of America and of the whole world. It would seem that the ideal of these seminomadic Indians is: omnia mea mecum porto -- everything that is mine I carry with me! and, apart from their weapons, a few implements, and a basket, it is unusual for them to carry anything else on their travels. They do not even transport their hammocks /202/ of bejuco or majagua from one camp to another, but rather make new ones each time they need them.

[352]

CAPTURED BY THE SAMATARI

him outside the range of the magic influence which had reduced him to such a hideous condition. But evidently they had only escaped the Samatari magic to fall straight into another, which was too much for the sick child. He died, sacrificed in a duel between two magic powers. 123* 754

VI

The great 'provisioning-march' of the Samatari now began. We went along with them. We were prisoners, we were guests, we were tolerated visitors—a bit of everything. The main body, with the women and children, led the way along a track that was years old and had been opened up again the day before by the younger members of the tribe, who possessed the one metal weapon used by the Samatari: a piece of a knife-blade stuck into a stick and firmly bound with bark soaked in vegetable gum. What story could this scrap of steel have told when it finally reached the headwaters of the Aracosa! 123* 222 487 484

The track was by no means straight, but for all its meanderings led vaguely towards the south-east. It lay for the most part through the dense thickets of fruit-bearing trees, which probably harboured other sorts of foodstuffs of which we knew nothing. The main body arrived to find that the young men had already picked nuts and fruit of all kinds and made piles of them at the foot of the trees. All the women had to do was take them up.

When meat of any sort is found and killed on these occasions, a couple of youngsters stay behind with it. They sling a hammock and light a fire and watch while it is slowly smoking on the spit. When the women come up, they pull off pieces of the flesh, put them into the rough hampers they carry on their shoulders and go on with the march, their babies jogging up and down on their backs, tied there with a strap made of bark. Some, like peripatetic vestal virgins, take fire with them, in the form of glowing brands, blowing on them as they go along lest the embers should grow cold. Thus the march of the Samatari leaves a trail of nutshells, rinds, ash, and little bits of charcoal. It suggests not so much an ordinary nomadic people on the move but rather a very special tribe composed of itinerant cooks. 123* 484 [251] [854]

With evening, or strictly speaking some time before the end of the afternoon, we found ourselves in a vast clearing where all the small plants, shrubs, bushes and grass had been cut away and swept and raked aside. All round this [361] [712]

RED CLOTH AND GREEN FOREST

*
123

- 484 open space ran a belt of rattan palms with their notoriously dangerous black
712 spines. There were just two openings: a way in, and a way out. This was a
361 defence work against any enemy that might come along. An aggressor had
little chance of bringing off a surprise attack against the Samatari over this
open ground, and if he made a frontal attack he would find 'bread for his
teeth'—that is, thorns for his feet.

[513]

At night, while the Indians were all chattering heedlessly in their hammocks or sleeping the light sleep of the savage, the two gaps in the cordon were closed and the camp became a fortress difficult to storm. If they stay for several days in one place, as sometimes happens during the rainy season when they are visiting their plantations of tobacco and cane (for arrows), they will put up a palisade round the camp, on the Guayca model. This is composed of the trunks of a very tough palm, driven into the ground as close together as possible. Thus entrenched they can withstand whole days of attack from a position of strength.

*
123

484

[262]

In the course of our march, one Samatari not only devoured the larvae of bees, neatly excavating them from their cells in the smoked honeycomb, but every now and then he would stop at a dead tree-trunk, seamed with ant-galleries or lanes, and run his thumb and forefinger along the groove as far as possible, pressing out the damp earthy substance, which he conveyed to his mouth like some rare *bonne bouche*. Smacking his lips, he carried on until he had demolished the whole network of these arboreal thoroughfares, and the ants fled away over the surface of the tree-trunk, lamenting the cataclysm that had overtaken them.

*
123

484

261

Even we tried this ant-hill diet, but a mixture of earth and sawdust hardly appeased our hunger. Sometimes, as we crossed a stream, a few of the Samatari bent down rapidly and picked out of the water some little white stones that were soft like lumps of lime. These they chewed as they went along, apparently swallowing them. They will also eat sand, the dirty, soft, vari-coloured sand which is found with the detritus of vegetable matter thrown up on the banks of a river after a flood. For on top of all this varied diet of theirs, the Samatari are also geophagists—earth-eaters. The reason for this is probably an instinctive prompting which leads them to acquire in this way the minerals their normal food—which they eat without salt or spices—does not supply.

*
123

262

484

Our great salvation was the fruit: meat being very precious to the savages, they were unwilling to give us any, and we had no means of hunting for ourselves. The gun had simply disappeared. For the Samatari too, fruit is the main

CAPTURED BY THE SAMATARI

source of nourishment, especially at this time of the year when every variety is ripe. We were able to experiment on ourselves and try out some of the widely discussed theories of modern dietetics, which amid the general clamour set up by more or less interested parties claims to be able to discover the original fount of humanity, and to arrive at the exact diet on which man in his natural state can exist.

123*
262
484 ●

The fruit here was of all kinds, unlimited in quantity and of every size and shape—and there it was, high up on the trees! True, there were piles of it along the path of this victualling tour, but Enrico and I weren't allowed to touch them. So I climbed, and fought off the ants. When I reached the fruit I broke off branches—the Samatari had my machete—and threw them down to Enrico, who gathered in the treasure, though not without an immediate attack on the choicest specimens 'in case they got lost' as he put it. Then I would make a hurried descent, sliding and ripping and skinning myself, to arrive on the ground covered with pestilential insects, my heart thumping with the effort. We stuffed ourselves till our cheeks were bursting, while the Samatari looked on, laughing and shouting out the name of the fruit.

Who else has ever had the chance to study the fruits of the Amazon forests, at the same time making himself the subject of experiments to determine their nutritive value? The Samatari, who are cut off from the waters of the Orinoco by thirty-two mountains, have likewise thirty-two varieties of fruit—there must be some magic in this number. The names of them all are well known and even the tiny tots learn them almost as soon as they can say 'Mama'. Every type of fruit imaginable is represented here, from nuts to acorns, from fruits as soft as tomatoes to others as dry and hard as bone, from single berries to huge bunches, and in addition to them all, a crowning delicacy of such beauty that it has more than food value alone, the white flowering heart of the palm. There are, too, a few conspicuously choice kinds, eagerly sought after by the Indians, which furnish a really substantial food and not just a few pleasant mouthfuls.

Podoimost, olashi, luamoshi, lahsa, sopah, monama and pukma—seven of the known fruits—are the ones that give you a meal, not merely refreshment, and they make magnificent eating.

Solituán specialized in podoimost, gathering them as he went along, without stopping. Good as they are, these chestnuts were not much sought after by the Samatari, at least at this season when there was other fruit available which they liked better. But Solituán, who was a sensible old fellow and worldly too

* But Solituan, who was a sensible old fellow and
123 RED CLOTH AND GREEN FOREST worldly

262 wise, picked them and put them in a 'bag' like a big open calyx made of leaves.
484 This chestnut is encased in a green rind, soft and spongy. He tore this off with
[415] his teeth and spat it out. The actual nut was no bigger than a billiard ball, and
this he stowed away in his bag. In the evening, round a fire whose glowing
ash was neatly raked to form a series of little ovens, the expatriate Samatari
roasted his chestnuts, scooping them out with his bare hand when they were
done. He even offered them round, if somewhat parsimoniously: the ratio was
three for him and one for us.

To us, who still had our own sense of the fitness of things, it hardly seemed
possible at first that humble berries and fruits of such unimpressive appearance
could be of such highly nutritive value. We turned therefore to the fruit that
had most eye-appeal—the ones the Indians scarcely bothered with as they went
along and did not consider worth collecting for the meal at nightfall. By the
Aracosa river cashew trees were plentiful, their fruits red as fire, and there was
another species we hadn't seen before, orange in colour and enormous. Some
of the fruits that had fallen with the weight of their ripe juice were the size of a
man's fist, and to eat three or four of them gave a pleasant sense of well-being,
even if it didn't last long.

The great trees must have been bearing a crop of thousands of pounds in
weight, because all around the forest floor was glowing with fallen fruit and
clouds of buzzing insects of every colour were busy glorifying the decay as
they settled on it.

But when we had devoured our comforting quantities of these cashew
fruits, some of them already over-ripe, there was a roughness on our teeth and
we began to feel sick. It was now that we were ready to appreciate the wisdom
of these primitive people, who left the florid purple fruits severely alone, to
bury their sharp teeth in more modest-looking fare that was a good deal
kinder to the human stomach.

No one can know the thrill of excitement that comes to the Samatari—and
other Indians too—when they find themselves underneath a big *helipass* tree
that brushes the waters of some little stream with the mass of its seed pods, long
and round like those of the senna tree. Many such pods are used exactly like the
ordinary French or kidney beans, but for this particular delicacy it is neither
the bean nor the pod itself that is eaten, but the white tender pulp in which the
beans are set. We ourselves found it far too sweet and sickly. But in spite of all
the excitement here, we had still not come to the fruit which was thought

CAPTURED BY THE SAMATARI

worthy of being packed up and carried with us. For this purpose, *lehposs* beans were too bulky and the white pulp over-delicate and inclined to go rotten too soon.

The *monama* and its little brother the *pukma* are the fruits that really rouse the collector's instinct in the Samatari, and they rely on these for a good part of the whole tribe's food supplies. The first time we saw them they seemed to us like olives, green when immature, brown when ripe, the rarer *pukma* being also the darker in colour. It was difficult for us to distinguish the trees that bore this fruit among all the rest, but the Samatari possess a more highly trained eye for this, and always stopped and skipped about, staring upwards through a mass of leaves that all looked alike to us. Sometimes fallen fruit on the ground gave them a clue, and they fell on it with excited cries to see how ripe it was, or, as it often proved, how worm-eaten. The youngest would be already up the tree—not the one in question, as a rule, but a neighbouring one easier to climb, from the top of which he would more easily be able to get at the fruiting branches.

Sempronio walked in silence. He was still haunted by fear. It had come as a shock to the Samatari (though they made a few jokes about it) when they learned that he was not a Guayca but a Shirian from the Canaracuni. The Valley of the Moon, to them, was the very heart of enemy territory, and had it not been for the protective magic invested in our two beards, they might easily have put him to death. After this came out, they had put him to work. The boy was pleased because this meant that he could eat. He helped them gather the food supplies, and by the time it came to eating them, he was friends with everybody and everybody was friends with him.

No Samatari could see Sempronio's smile and resist it. He displayed a prodigious agility up in the trees, even winning the admiration of those who might well have been his executioners. The *monama* soon began tumbling down and the human monkeys scrambled to collect it. None was eaten. This berry matures slowly, giving strength to the men and abundant milk to the women. Actually this is the berry of one of the Lauraceae, and has something of the tartness, the bitterness, of that aromatic shrub so reminiscent of the Mediterranean lands. But the pulp is rich and oily and sweet as butter. After a few minutes over the fire it is not only cooked through, but mashed as well; and if you are hungry during the day's march it can be eaten without being cooked at all if you hold it in your mouth for ten minutes or so, when the warmth and saliva will render it deliciously tender.

123
262
484

*

123

RED CLOTH AND GREEN FOREST

262

● 484

There were often piles of *luamoshi* heaped up underneath trees much too big and too tall for me to have climbed, even had I been dying of hunger. The *luamoshi* is a queer, oval-shaped nut with a big, woody husk enclosed in a compact mass of tiny, needle-sharp spines that resemble the crystals of certain mineral forms of asbestos. It takes some opening, but once open offers man the rich enjoyment of a soft white nut running with a creamy milk.

The consumption of these nuts sets a real problem in logistics and psychology. Transport over any distance is hampered by the exorbitant weight of the shells, a weight which the Indians with their extremely practical minds consider to be out of proportion to the food value of the nut, high though this is. But once the nuts are shelled, there are the piles of gleaming white grains, so attractive that no one can resist them and they are devoured without a thought for the mothers' milk or the strength of the children's blood. Without a doubt, this matter of the *luamoshi* represents one of the outstanding problems of the Samatari provisioning-march and still awaits a satisfactory solution.

VII

262

[721]

The difference in taste between the two races—Shirians and bearded men—comes out most emphatically in their appreciation of the various fruits. There is one particular kind which the Shirians adore—in fact, deify: they will even go to war over the picking of it and those who fall on the battlefield are deemed martyrs and saints.

262

272

[273]

For the Shirians, Saint Carposforo lives incarnate in the miraculous, the almost mythical *lahsa*; while we, the bearded ones, would sooner identify him with the *sopah*, which is a blend of fig, strawberry and mulberry. The *lahsa* grows on the Corozo palm, one of the tallest of the palm trees, which is covered with long and terrible thorns that keep the monkeys far away from its forbidden fruit. Beneath the thorns there is a sweet liquid—palm wine. It can be obtained by lighting a fire at the base of the tree, so that all the juices collect together towards the top of the palm, near the growing part. The tree is then felled, and a little skilful surgery will drain the liquid, which ferments readily. But the Samatari do not indulge in this practice: some deep and ancient wisdom, though they are scarcely conscious of it, has given them the simplest possible commandment about drinking: thou shalt drink only water. Nor does

Nor does

CAPTURED BY THE SAMATARI

the usefulness of the Corozo palm end here: it furnishes a hard, black wood that gives the Indians their finest bows, real masterpieces treasured with pride by their owners and only bought and sold with a great deal of ceremony.

The *lahsa* represents the Indian food-ideal. It grows in bunches up to eighty pounds or more in weight, each fruit being the size of an egg and in shape and colour not unlike a small, ripe cheese. Cooking it takes a long time. The outside is a thick starchy layer, orange-coloured and rich-tasting without being over-sweet or sickly. It is better than any of our starchy foods such as bread or potatoes or chestnuts or *gnocchi*. The whole of it is edible right down to the little stone itself. This is a kind of delicious almond which crumbles pleasantly under one's teeth and leaves nothing but an insatiable desire for more—hence its name, *lahsa*.

Lahsa can be carried: there are no doubts about this, as in the case of the *luamoshi*. Its golden bunches are big enough to cover up a man, and the carrier protects himself from the thorns on the branches with a good thick cushion of leaves. In the evening they are cooked, so that the grim-faced women of the tribe are able to produce their milk after all and tirelessly pass it on to the scabby, drooling mouths of their infants, who in their turn convert it into blood and yield it up to the clouds of flies and mosquitoes which wrap them round with a perpetual dark veil like an aura of evil and accursed spirits.

In recompense for its fabulous generosity, the *lahsa* tree has been accorded one great privilege that sets it apart from all the other fruit-bearing trees of the forest: it is never cut down for the easier harvesting of the crop. The fruit is brought down by some clever manipulation of a long pole, for no climber's hands and feet could withstand the thorns. If in very special circumstances the tree has to be cut down, then its upper stem is opened so that its last, secret riches can be cut out—the ten pounds of sweet, crisp, chestnut-flavoured tenderness that is its growing point, the heart. Then the tree will weep out its tears from its torn breast, tears of wine that are lost.

Certainly the tribes living nearest to the forest and the forest's deep anti-human mysteries have chosen the *lahsa* as their god of food: but we, a hybrid mixture of natural fears and supernatural thunderings, chose to set up opposite it our own saint, the yellow and most luscious *sopah*. When the marching horde reached a gnarled tree which evoked the quick cry '*Sopah!*' they flung themselves at it—such is their agility in tree-climbing that they literally seem to fling themselves up—and began a feast that reduced them to silence because

RED CLOTH AND GREEN FOREST

262
484

they were eating so fast. The weighty mass of the fruit soon began to distend their stomachs and later on the little seeds began to settle and give rise to belching noises which had to be heard to be believed. But for all that, it was apparent that they did not take the *sopah* altogether seriously and were not able to accept the primacy which we were only too ready to award it, in the same way as some religions, while recognizing the prophets of another, will consider them inferior to their own.

This was the Samatari's attitude over the *sopah*. They held it in a very mild contempt—and it is worth noting that this contempt sprang from sources too prejudiced to be quite sincere. It is the womenfolk who put a smoke-screen round the *sopah* tree and divert their men's attention towards the *monama* and its satellites. The women cannot climb the *sopah* trees burdened with their babies on their backs, and if they left them on the ground they would be eaten alive by ants. For the women, too, there is always the risk of leaving their pendulous breasts on the thorns. Thus they are never exactly on the spot when the *sopah* fruits are being gathered and can never eat their fill because their men consider the *sopah* a divinity whose tender fleshy form cannot survive if transported. The women, therefore, mere starving gleaners on the ground, have to be content with the fallen fruit, usually the unripe and worm-eaten specimens which their menfolk have rejected. Hence their stubborn propaganda against what we considered the finest fruit in the forest.

262 The *sopah*, like all especially good things, has a flavour that cannot easily be defined: it has all the good points of other fruits, and none of the disadvantages. It is like a fig, but better than a fig—there is no skin. It is like a mulberry, but sweeter. Its flavour outdoes the strawberry, which in shape it somewhat resembles. It offers perfection to the taste-buds, a luscious, fleshy perfection which properly belongs to the sphere of the erotic.

We saw ourselves dwelling for a long, long time in these gardens of *sopah* and *laka*, far from the arrows of the Samatari and the guns of civilized men. But this was just an empty dream. Because without an Indian to help us gather them, when we wearied of losing our blood on the trees, we should come down to eating the windfalls crawling with worms, while the monkeys made fun of us, pelting us with the *sopah* stones—vain relics of our chosen saint.

5

At Home with the Samatari

1

SOON we had some friends among the Samatari: a group of young boys who behaved as though they were members of our private levy. They were also a privileged band within the tribe itself, because they had made themselves loincloths out of scraps of our shirts—abandoned by our original despoilers. They were with us at all times except during the actual marching periods, which did not last too long. They hung their hammocks near ours—indeed, we had at first taken them to be our guards. But their attitude very soon became clear: they were our friends and admirers. Young and full of life, they saw in us the representatives of an unknown world, the wide world of their yearnings. 123 *

With their appearance on the scene, the worst of our hunger was over. True, there was always a chronic desire for something to eat gnawing at us, deep down, probably owing to the poor quality of the diet, the excessive proportion of fruit and the lack of meat (which came only rarely and then was either half-raw or burned)—but this unacknowledged hunger was an old acquaintance of ours in forest conditions: it even plagues the explorer with ample provisions and the means of cooking them to his liking. With nightfall, the boys put a fire—'the blanket of the night'—under our hammocks. It consisted mostly of slow-burning termite nests, where the fat ants fried slowly, wreathing the air with a heavy smell which we got used to after a time.

The provisioning march continued along the banks of the Aracosa, through a forest region of huge, closely packed trees where the going was drier and cleaner than it had been before. Fruit trees were plentiful and the nomadic horde of Samatari went along in high glee. We were now reunited with all our old friends, from Uarema to Sempronio, who moved about as freely among these unpredictable hosts of ours as they would have done at home on the Marevari. 123 *
484 •

AT HOME WITH THE SAMATARI

When the whole tribe is moving, weighed down with all its goods and chattels, progress is slow. A stage that takes it a day can be covered by an hour's quick marching.

123*
[484] ●

Hashimo, with all his old gestures, and with all those grimaces which looked so expressive and meant nothing at all, slung his hammock cheerfully on to the same stake as he had used previously, and we followed his example. Sempronio, whose eyes were as quick as a ferret's and always on the ground (that is, the immediate food-horizon), had discovered a most curious thing. Somewhere near, there was fire. For a while, this alarmed us, and we sighed with relief when we discovered what it was. The Samatari, on our earlier visit, had set fire to one end of a large tree-trunk. It was very hard wood, but completely hollow inside. The fire had continued to burn slowly inside the trunk, which acted like a chimney and kept up a steady draught. I have seen fires of this kind last for weeks and then, when nearly all the wood has been consumed, burst into leaping flames.

Our own night-fires were quickly lit from this natural hearth, and from weariness we slept through our first night of almost complete freedom.

Hashimo and Solituan slipped away at dawn and returned a little later with a fish they had killed with an arrow in the Aracosa. It weighed no more than a pound and they cooked it hastily and ate it furtively—leaving poor Sempronio the bones, which he found on the ground later and sucked with a rather puzzled expression.

Our boy guides were in the middle of a palaver with Uarema. Something seemed to be amiss. They were making signs towards the Uraricoera—that is, in the direction of the tribe. A chill of fear stole over us: it looked as if we were being ordered back. If this turned out to be the case, however, all things considered we had a good chance of refusing the order and getting away with it. We had a gun with five shots, two machetes, four bows and a number of arrows. If necessary we could shoot once, to create an atmosphere of terror and then quietly slip away. They wouldn't dare follow us. But while Enrico and I were standing there planning these tactics, Uarema came up.

'The boys are off home,' he told us. 'Home' sounds an exotic and quite meaningless word in the Aracosa forest. 'We'll go on by ourselves. They say it's too far. There's nothing to eat on the Uagna, and nothing even before you get to it.'

The Samatari themselves had come up to us in the meanwhile, and were making signs towards their 'home' in the south-west.

THE TANG OF THE EARTH

and by their squalor—which we just had to accept. However, better that than our last two lonely nights over again, and our two days' rest here did us good.

Plans for continuing our journey did not go as smoothly as we should have wished. Not one of the Uaca was inclined to go down the Ocamo with us. It seemed there were a lot of Guayca Indians along the river, and that there weren't sufficient canoes. Apart from the old log which had enabled us to cross the river, there was only one little craft, and this had a gaping hole in the bows, stopped up with a great lump of clay to make it watertight. The only way open to us otherwise lay westwards towards the Matakuni: the Uaka declared that we could get there with only one *maneshi* (overnight stop). We should have to climb a mountain, but it was not high and there was a pass. On the Matakuni there were other Uaka, and then, higher up—if we understood them correctly—there were some Ukumatari, savage and suspicious, but not bad men. It didn't take us long to come to a decision, and we started out for the Matakuni.

The first day's march brought us, in the evening, to a col between two great round humps of granite, from which we could make out, to the west, the vertical wall of the Duida mountains. We looked longingly in their direction, knowing that at their foot lay the savannah land of Esmeralda and the great Orinoco.

But the Matakuni Uaka seemed equally reluctant to take us down their river as far as the Orinoco, and they too gave as a reason the eternal fear of the Guayca. To go any further westwards, relying on the problematical tracks, seemed too difficult a project, and one that held out little hope of success. True, we might reach the Padamo, but if no-one was willing to take us down that river either, where were we to make for then? We couldn't keep trekking over the whole of the *Territorio Amazonas* (the southern tip of Venezuela) from river to river until we got to the Orinoco. There was only one thing to do, however paradoxical it sounded: follow the Matakuni right up to its source. The Uaka were prepared, for a suitable fee, to escort us there, doing the trip in ten days. We could then cross the mountains, which seemed to be inhabited by other Uaka, and descend one or other of the tributaries of the Ventuari watershed. This route bristled with difficulties: from the Matakuni rapids to the problems we should have to face on the northern cordilleras, but these caused the Uaka no sinking of the heart and they were ready to tackle them. They told us too that when we reached the highlands by this route we should run into the Makiritari tracks leading from the Ventuari-Erbato-Merevari territory to the

Waica
Guaharibo

/434 cont./

197
101 Nevertheless, what distinguishes the Guajaribo as a separate group from the Guaika, even more than the small differences in language, are certain differences in their habits and material culture.

101
177 The Guajaribo share a goodly portion of their habitation zone with the Maquiritare /Makiritare/ Indians, who live to the north. As a result of this, it appears that they have adopted
(248) many things from Maquiritare culture; for example, they cultivate yuca more than the /435/ Guaika do. Their cotton hammocks and those of the Guaika seem to be a simplified version
(352) of the ones which the Maquiritare make. They also build some
(342) few ranchos with double-sloped roofs. And, like the Maquiritare,
● (484) they travel much farther than the Guaika.

191
192 A certain number of the Guajaribo are bilingual, and they speak Maquiritare in their commercial relations. They have also adopted a certain number of Spanish words through the Maquiritare and through their outside contacts, which have been more numerous than the contacts which the Guaika of the Orinoco have had with outsiders.

101 The title "Guajaribo" seems to be a name given to this tribe by outsiders and adopted by them for commercial reasons. The Maquiritare call the Guajaribo "Shidishana" or "Shiriana." These names, Shidishana and Shiriana, are the ones which the Guajaribo themselves employ when they talk among themselves or when they talk with the Guaika and the Maquiritare.

Maps

126 I have not been able to find a map of the exact territory inhabited by the Guaika /Waica/ and Guajaribo /Guaharibo/ tribes. For example, on most of the maps the Ocamo River is shown running almost parallel to the Padamo River, when in reality it runs almost parallel to the Orinoco River. I have corrected some of these errors, but my maps are still only approximations.

126
628 On the map of the local area of El Platanal, I have tried to show the friendly and hostile relations between the settlements, as well as the approximate location of the Guaika

/440 cont./

- 202
● 484 Generally the messengers travel only during the day and communicate the message at night, after having rested from the trip. Nevertheless, in times of war, messengers may travel during the night, and urgent messages are communicated immediately upon the arrival of the messenger, be it day or night.
- [416] A messenger who travels at night carries with him two or three pieces of firewood tied together in torch fashion.
- 195 Official dealings are frequently carried out in the same form of crooning. A man might in this way request official authorization to take a certain girl as his wife. These dealings are generally carried on at night.
- [584]
- 437 Nevertheless, business dealings are generally carried out during the day, so that both participants in the negotiation may have ample opportunity to see and examine what they are getting.

142

Human Biology

The hair of the Guaika /Waica/ is lighter than that of the other Indians and of most of the Creoles who live in the Territorio Federal Amazonas.

The hair of the majority of the individuals is fine, but some of them have quite stiff hair. The color of the hair is black or chestnut, and a few have hair with a slightly reddish tone. Some of the children have hair that is very light in color, which seems to become darker as they grow. Few of the older persons have gray hair.

The majority of men either have a very thin beard or none at all. The arms, legs, and chest are generally free of hair.

/441/ The eyes of the majority of them are brown, and some of them have black eyes. Some of the children have blue eyes. A few individuals have the inner corner of the eye rounded in a way somewhat similar to that of certain Oriental peoples.

Their noses are short and wide.

The Guaika are well fed, but in general do not show any excess muscle or fat. The Guaika to the south of the Orinoco tend to be fatter and plumper, it would seem, than those of El Platanal or those who live to the north of this locality.

/447/

The Fiesta of the Harvest of "Pijiguao"

527 The fiesta of the harvest of the fruit of the "pijiguao" palm
574 (Bactris gasipaës) is perhaps the most important event of the year.

- During this harvest everybody has food to spare and consequently
● [484] can receive all those who want to visit them. As a result of this
there is a great deal of traveling during this period.

[628] Frequently two or three settlements gather in order to celebrate the fiesta. Then one part will go to celebrate the same fiesta in other friendly settlements.

The hosts, and sometimes the visitors as well, go out on a hunting trip, which lasts for several days, until they collect a sufficient quantity of meat. This meat is smoked and preserved for the fiesta.

527 When the hunters come back, the fiesta begins at night with considerable joy and singing. The hunters gather and march around the interior patio of the settlement several times. Then
[526] there begins a mock battle with cudgels. Those who have axes or machetes use these in place of cudgels. They are waved about in the air in a way similar to an attack in fencing or fighting with cudgels. The weapons clash together, but blows are not struck at the body.

After this comes the fire procession. Every man takes a burning torch from the fire and joins the others who go around and around the periphery of the great circular patio formed by the huts. From time to time, when passing in front of one of the surrounding ranchos, they rap with the torch on one of the straight supports which hold up the roof, scattering sparks in the air.

[524] Afterwards, they do what is known as "golpeo al pecho" /hitting the chest/. The boys and a few men pair off against those of another settlement and carry out a duel of blows on the chest. One will present his chest while the other hits it with the side of the fist.

[533] All of these acts are carried out amidst much jubilation and singing. Sometimes this is repeated on the following night.

/448/

527 After this comes the daytime ceremony. A great deal of
276 "yopo" is prepared and placed near the center of the group of huts.
Some six or eight boys of the "host" settlement march around
the patio and then toward the place where the "yopo" is.
Another group of boys follows them rapidly. As each group
arrives at the center, the boys receive a puff of "yopo" in the
nose. After each and every one of the boys has taken the "yopo"
through the nasal passage, the men follow them in the same way,
in groups of six or eight. And when all of the "hosts" are in the
center, the ones representing the "guest" or visiting settlement,
follow them in the same "yopo" ceremony.

527 When each and every one has received his portion of "yopo,"
526 the group of men begins to march around in the center of the
276 circular patio of the settlement. After a few minutes have
passed, the men begin to separate off in pairs. The most violent
of them begin having duels of blows on the chest. Others, seated
by pairs on the ground, talk among themselves in the manner of
the crooned messages.

The duels of blows on the chest receive the greatest atten-
tion. All those who are not paired off are watching. Also
many of the women come to watch them. The group of on-
lookers approaches so close that only a part of them can manage
to see what is actually happening.

527 Some of the men who have taken too much "yopo" lie im-
276 potently on their backs and are dragged out of the sun into the
shade of the houses by the women.

And others who have taken a certain excess of "yopo" keep
walking around, and their wives have great difficulty in keeping
them inside the settlement. If they manage to get into the woods
with no one watching over them, they may find themselves in
grave danger.

[574] After a while, everything begins to quiet down. Meat and
[484] as much "pifiguao" as it is possible to carry are given to the guests
for their return trip. Thus they may take as long as a week on the
trip to their settlement without running out of provisions.

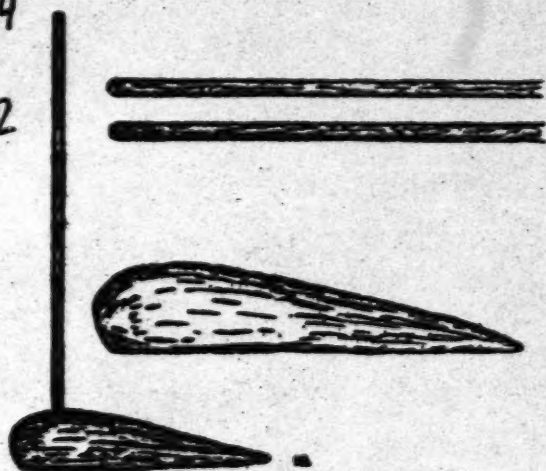
/462 cont./

Fire

372 The Guaika /Waica/ use the system of simple rotation to make fire. This consists of a piece of soft wood, flattened on one side and rounded on the other, about four centimeters wide at one end, and whose tapering shape ends in a blunt point at the other end. With the tooth of a large rodent they make a circular cut in it near its broader end, and in this is inserted a slender stick (from 30 to 40 centimeters /sic/ in diameter at its base). This stick is held between the palms of the hands and given a rotating movement until a spark burns in the wood dust which has been formed by the rotation of the stick in the hole made in the board. (See Fig. 6.)

[237]
[412] 7463/ The tapered piece of soft wood is of cacao, in which several successive holes can be made, and each hole can be used several times for lighting a fire.

In general there is someone in the settlement who has a fire lighted, so that when some native needs fire he obtains it there. In order to carry fire a short distance, two or three lighted sticks are tied together, forming a fagot. When they travel at night, they carry lighted torches to protect themselves against animals



/Fig. 6/

/463 cont. /

373 as well as to light the path. Torches of gum and resin are also
416 used sometimes on the paths during the night, but the common
484 type of torch is the fagot of tied pieces of wood. A group which
travels at night (as occurs when they are returning after nightfall
from the work of fishing) may carry only one torch. Then they
stop from time to time to arrange the joined sticks and to revive
the fire, keeping it from going out.

373 The wood fire is the principal source of light and heat in the
374 settlements. The fires are kept lighted during the entire night,
both to produce warmth and for protection against predatory
animals and the spirits of human beings which have returned.

372 There do not seem to be any beliefs or ceremonies related
to the production and maintenance of fire.

Weapons

411 The principal weapon of the Guaika /Waica/ is the bow and
arrow. They also use macanas.

(824) The bow is made of palm wood, generally of "pajiguao,"
(283) with a strong string made of threads of bark. This string has
three or more threads of twisted bark, which give it great
strength.

(249) The shafts of their arrows are made of the festooned part
(237) of a certain wild cane, which they cultivate in their "conucos."
They feather them with the points of wing feathers of wild turkeys.

Arrow points vary according to the type of game which is
to be the target. The wide bamboo point is used /464/ principally
against large land animals; the bone one for shooting large
and medium-sized birds, and the poisoned points principally for
monkeys. Any of these points might be used against man in
the event of war. Against small birds they shoot the shaft,
first removing the point, or they use a point ramified at the end,
made out of a small branch quickly broken off some nearby
plant. The accompanying Fig. 7 /see p. 35/ shows the different
types of arrow points of the Guaika. /Fig. 7 appears here./

411 supple wood and well over six feet long, it is very powerful. With it the Waika can shoot an arrow more than a hundred yards and can hit a *paujil*—a bird about the size of a turkey—at forty yards. Normally two or three arrows are carried and they are as long as, if not longer than, the bow itself. The shafts are made of reed which, Cardona said, is specially grown for the purpose on their plantations, and are feathered by falcon's feathers. The feathers are meticulously tied in a near-perfect spiral with thread of forest cotton or morisco palm fibre. Each arrow has a different head specially adapted to a particular purpose. Spare arrow-heads are carried in a quiver in which also is carried fire-making material to protect it from the damp.

[372] The quiver is a simple bamboo case to which are also tied a
[412] firestick and a number of little knives made from the incisors
[237] of a large rodent called a capybara. It is carried on the back by means of a string slung round the forehead.

● 484 Such comprise the simple impedimenta of the Waika on his journeys through the forest. The women, who accompany their mates on their many ceaseless wanderings, presumably have their own burdens to carry, but we saw nothing of them until we visited our first native village on the next day.

491 As we went up-river we came across the remains of a rude bridge which had formerly spanned the two hundred yards of river and which had been carried away by the flood waters. It was the biggest bridge we had seen although we had passed a number of lesser ones fashioned of lianas spanning the tributaries. On the bank where the bridge had been were some twenty natives and a handful of children.

114 "Apo! Shori! Apo!" they greeted us.

We knew from Butrón that, though his men were accustomed to replenish their banana stocks at this place, they had so far never been allowed to visit the village hidden somewhere in the forest.

221 The Waika lives on wild fruits, fish, meat and the produce of
[484] plantations adjacent to his villages. Most of his time he spends
[262] wandering in the forest and his fleeting appearances at his village occur usually only when natural resources fail or when he has to defend himself against an enemy horde. He knows

351 large entrance, that leading to the river or stream. All entrances are covered with dry leaves and brush in the evening and the slightest movement of the covering creates sufficient noise to alert the dogs.

133
[37] The Ygnomamö occupy a relatively homogeneous geographical region of low-lying tropical jungle interrupted by densely-wooded hills that sometimes reach an altitude of 2,500 feet, some 2,000 feet above the elevation of the general

361
[33]
[48] terrain. Larger hills are more common in the headwaters of the Orinoco and along the boundaries separating Brazil from Venezuela, but the Indians prefer to make their villages in the lowlands on small streams, as all of their travelling is done on foot. Only recently have the Ygnomamö begun moving to the larger rivers, where they may obtain canoes and steel tools from foreigners. In 1950 there was only one Ygnomamö village, Mahekodo-tedi, on a navigable portion of the Orinoco River; since then at least seven or eight villages have moved to the Orinoco or one of its larger tributaries in order to gain access to trade goods (axes and machetes) foreign to their culture. The overwhelming number of Ygnomamö villages,

[221]
[48] however, can only be reached by walking to them. During the wet season (April-September) travel all but ceases between villages because the trails linking villages are inundated.

241 The Ygnomamö are slash-and-burn horticulturists, subsisting mainly on plantains and bananas, of which they cultivate four or five varieties each. Following these crops in economic importance are several root crops, including taro,

792 villagers return from their visit, returning only to fetch
361 food from the garden. When the men are away on a raid, the women and children are concealed in these temporary sites until the men return. During the dry season when raiding and feasting are common, villages are frequently deserted; the men are away on a raid and the women and children are hiding in the jungle, or the entire village has gone off to participate in a feast at another village. This pattern has rather unfortunately been described as nomadism, or semi-nomadism, by a number of students of Yanomamö culture. I wish to emphasize that the Yanomamö population movements, annually or over a longer period of time, are almost exclusively a function of their warfare pattern and not economic considerations, as is implied in the use of the terms nomadism and semi-nomadism.

422
484 All males above 13 or 14 years of age have a bow,
(44) arrows, a bamboo case for carrying extra arrow tips, a fire
(45) drill, and several 'knives' made from the incisors of the
(372) agouti rodent. Both sexes have either a cotton or a vine
(237) hammock. These possessions are easily carried by the owner
(352) on long trips and are rapidly packed. Whenever I wanted to
(123) accompany a group of people on trips to other villages they always complained about how much of a burden I would be. It always took me several hours to prepare my packs, and I always took more than I could comfortably carry myself, having
484 to hire some of them to assist me. They, on the contrary, could be ready to depart within ten minutes of their decision to leave, having only to roll up their hammocks and pack a few

484 plantains to eat en route. Most of the time they did not even carry their hammocks, as these could be easily manufactured from bark strips in a matter of minutes.

[462]
[435] Women make several kinds of baskets, including ones to carry the family possessions when the group moves. When the entire village moves, progress is slow and only a few miles are covered each day. The reason for this is that older people and those who are sick travel very slowly, [462]
[435] children must be carried by their parents, and food in large quantities must be transported to provision the moving group. Thus, a trip that a group of young men could easily make in one day would require two or three days if the entire village moved that distance.

415
323 The only non-portable¹ (as well as the only durable) item made by the Yanomamö is a large, heavy, poorly fired [84]
[43] clay pot. These are manufactured by only a few villages, which serve as trading centers for this industry. They are [462]
[422] made by men and are their property since women are too clumsy to be permitted to handle and use them and would probably [567] break them. When a pot does break, the fragments are used as mortars for grinding drugs, small stone celts, found in the woods by the Yanomamö, serving as pestles. The larger fragments of a broken pot are used as cooking plates in the [199] manufacture of cassave bread. Despite the fact that most of the Yanomamö villages have not been contacted directly, the

¹ The pots are concealed in the garden when the group moves.



Fig. 2-1. A Yanoama village and plantain garden, aerial view (Tutuahi River, Brazil).

TRAILS AND TRAVEL. Trails lead out from the village in several directions. Some of them terminate in the gardens that surround the village, but a few of them continue on into the jungle and lead eventually to other villages. The unexperienced eye would not recognize them as trails, as they are hardly more than winding paths through brush, over or around logs, through streams and swamps, and up hills. The Yanoama take the most direct route to their destination, regardless of the terrain. A foreigner learns how to recognize a trail only after considerable experience. The most telltale signs are the numerous broken twigs at about knee height left by Yanoama travelers who compulsively keep their hands occupied snapping off brush and twigs as they walk. Another sign is the occasional log that is worn smooth from the tread of numerous travelers who prefer to walk along a log rather than go around it.

The most commonly used trail from Kaobawil's village leads to the two Shamatazi villages, Reysoböwei-teri and Mōmariböwei-teri, southwest of Upper Bissai-teri. Hardly a week goes by in the dry season without a few individuals making a trip from one of these villages to Bissai-teri or vice versa. A group of young men can make this trip in one day if they walk rapidly and leave early in the morning. Older men, women, and children must plan on a two day journey, as they walk more slowly and rest more frequently. There are a number of temporary shelters along the trail built by previous visitors, so the traveler does not have to spend much time putting one of these into repair should he decide to camp overnight.

20 • ADAPTATION

484
152 The jungle provides a number of hazards to the barefoot traveler in that most species of palm have long, sharp spines protruding from their trunks or leaf stems. The most common and recurrent injury the Yanomamö sustain is thorns in the feet. A party of ten men can rarely travel an hour without one of them stopping to extract a thorn from his foot. This is always accompanied by hisses and clicks of pain on the part of the victim, who gouges the thorn out with either an arrow point or another thorn. Their feet have thick calluses on them, but because the trails frequently cross streams and swamps, the calluses soften and are easily pierced by thorns.

Another, but rarer, hazard is snakes.² There are always a few cases of snake bite in each village every year, although few of them are fatal. Most snake-bite victims recover from the wound with no ill side effects. I treated two cases of snake bite that were like this. But a few bites are severe enough to cause the loss of a limb. One of my better acquaintances, a young man of some thirty years, lost a leg because of a snake bite when he was about fifteen years old, and will spend the rest of his life hopping on one leg, a form of locomotion he has mastered so thoroughly that he almost manages to keep up with the group when they visit other villages.

484
221
628
132 The most of the intervillage traveling is done from September through April, the dry season. For the remainder of the year the trails, or substantial portions of them, are underwater. At this time the rains are frequent and heavy, and the small streams that can be easily crossed on foot in the dry season become impassable torrents. Small lakes replace the marshy low ground, and communication between villages all but ceases. As the Yanomamö are an inland people and avoid locating their villages near large streams, all travel is done on foot, and each village becomes an isolated entity at the peak of the wet season (June).³ If the group must travel, it will make simple vine and pole bridges over the smaller streams. A pair of slender poles is stuck into the river and crossed to form an X-frame. Vines are used to lash the poles together where they intersect, and another pole is laid from the bank to the X-frame, also secured by vines. Then another pair of poles is stuck into the stream and lashed to form another X-frame. The long pole is then extended out further from the bank, and so on, until the stream is bridged. A vine railing is attached to the protruding members of the X-frames. The bridges usually last only a short time. The first heavy rain will swell the stream and the current will wash it away.

323 TECHNOLOGY Much of Yanomamö technology is like the pole-and-vine bridge: crude, but very effective, and not destined to last for any great period of time. The only durable artifact produced is a crude, poorly fired clay pot. It is nearly an inch thick at the bottom and tapers to almost nothing at the brim. Consequently, it breaks very easily. For this reason, women, regarded as clumsy, are rarely allowed to touch or handle them. When the clay pots are used, the men do the cooking, as, for example, during feasts. The pot is made by the coil technique: The untempered clay is kneaded to the proper consistency by hand, rolled into long, slender ropes, and these, in turn, placed on top of each other to form a continuous rope of clay. The coils are then scraped flat so that the interior and exterior of the pot are smooth. The conical-shaped pot is allowed to dry in the shade, then fired by placing brush and wood over it. The end product is

[165] ²Two percent of all adult deaths are due to snake bite; 54 percent are due to malaria, and other epidemic diseases (Chagnon 1966) and 24 percent of adult males die in warfare.

[361] ³The Yanomamö began moving their villages out to navigable rivers after 1955. Up to that time there was only one village, Mahero-dö-nti, located on a navigable portion of the Orinoco River.

342
302
301
824
142



Fig. 2-3. Thatching a new roof with leaves.

The Indians do not like the wind because it blows the leaves off the roof. They do not tie the leaves down, depending on age and the rain to pack them into a homogeneous layer. They sometimes throw long sticks and brush on the roof to keep the wind from blowing the leaves away, but their major defense is magic: when a strong breeze comes up, the shamans rush to the center of the village, wave their arms frantically, and shout incantations to Wadoriwá, the spirit of the wind, enjoining him to stop blowing the leaves off the roof.

The Yanomamö make another kind of shelter when they travel. It can be erected in less than a half-hour. A long front pole is selected and joined to two shorter back poles with two sticks. The roof structure thus fashioned is triangular in shape, about

342
821
756
1789

342
484

THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT · 29

4 feet off the ground at the rear and 6 feet off the ground at the front. Shorter sticks are then laid crossways on the major roof poles and these, in turn, covered with several layers of long, broad, wild "banana" leaves (see Glossary, under "Banana, wild"). It is quite small, but can sleep three individuals. Frequently, the traveler finds the remains of one of these houses and has merely to put a new layer of leaves on the roof to make it waterproof; occasionally, he takes a chance that it won't rain that night and does not improve the hut at all. 342 484 •

When the Yanomamö settle a new area, they erect temporary villages of these crude huts and live in them until they can build a *shabono*. They also live in huts like these while they are re-roofing the old *shabono*. 342

The permanent village is complete when the palisade of logs is erected around its circumference. This is placed some 3 or 4 feet behind the roof, allowing space for a path around the village inside the palisade. The palisade itself is about 10 feet high and usually made of a mixture of palm and hardwood logs. It is kept in repair only when there is some reason to suspect raiders. Otherwise, people pilfer logs from it for use as firewood. The entrance to the village, as well as the palisade entrance, is covered with brush and logs at night to keep out intruders. Anyone trying to enter will inevitably make the brush move and alarm the village dogs. 351 [313] [231]

FOOD AND ITS GATHERING The jungle provides numerous varieties of food, both animal and vegetable. The most commonly taken game includes several species of monkeys, two varieties of wild "turkey," two species of wild pig, armadillos, anteaters, tapir, deer, a small alligator, small rodents, and several species of smaller birds. Wild vegetable foods commonly exploited by the Yanomamö are: palm fruits of several species, hardwood fruits, brazil nuts, tubers, and the seed pods of the feral banana. Of these, the palm fruits are by far the most significant. 224 262 222 262

These occur seasonally and, for brief periods of time, produce large quantities of fruits. Unfortunately, there is very little edible substance in each fruit, so that in order to get filled, one must eat the edible portion of enormous quantities of fruit. The Yanomamö extensively exploit two closely related palms, *yai* and *karubi*. The *yai* fruits are about the size of small hen's eggs and occur in large clusters, weighing 80 pounds and more, near the tops of the palm trees. The *karubi* fruits are about half that size. The exterior portion of the fruit is a leathery shell which is peeled with the teeth. Inside there is a thin layer of very bitter, white flesh. This is chewed and sucked off. The taste resembles that of a poor grade of bath soap. Of the two, I found *karubi* the more repugnant. My throat burned when I ate them. [252]

Another commonly exploited palm is the *adiumbi*. It is tangerine red in color and covered with a leather-like skin that consists of hundreds of small scales. They are about the size of large hen's eggs and resemble small hand grenades. When the fruit is dry, as, for example, when it is first cut from the tree, it is almost impossible to get the leathery scales off. The Yanomamö overcome this difficulty by throwing the fruit bunches into water and letting them soak for several days, after which the scales can be easily scraped off with the fingernails, exposing a thin layer of yellowish, soft flesh that tastes very much like cheese. The fruits begin to ferment after they have soaked, producing a slightly pungent taste. I enjoyed eating *adiumbi* with the Yanomamö; the fruit was good, and the technique of eating it was very sociable. We would wade into the swamp where the fruit had been submerged and grope around in the murky water to locate it. After [252]

132 · YANOMAMÖ WARFARE

726 If there are novices in the raiding party, the older men will conduct mock raids, showing them how they are to participate. A grass dummy or soft log is frequently employed in his, as was the case in the *wayu itou* held in the village the day before the raiders left. Particularly young men will be positioned in the marching party somewhere in the middle of the single file of raiders so they will not be the first ones to be exposed to danger should the raiders themselves be ambushed. These young men will also be permitted to retreat first. Damowä had a twelve-year-old son when he was killed. This boy, Matarawä, was recruited into the raiding party to give him an opportunity to avenge his father's death. The older men made sure he would be exposed to minimum danger, as this was his first raid.

726 The separated groups of raiders approach the village at dawn and conceal themselves near the commonly used paths to the source of drinking water. They wait for the enemy to come to them. A good many of the victims of raids are shot while fetching water.

Frequently, the enemy is wary and acts defensively at all times when there is an active war going on. Only large groups of people can leave the village, and these are well armed. Raiders will not attack a large group such as this. When the enemy is found to be this cautious, the raiders have no choice but to retreat or to shoot volleys of arrows blindly into the village, hoping to strike someone at a distance. They retreat after they release their arrows, depending on the gossip of other villages to learn if their arrows did find their marks. Rarely, one of the raiders will attempt to enter the village during the night and kill someone while he sleeps. Damowä's younger brother allegedly accomplished this on one raid, but few men are brave enough to try it. Most of the time the raiders manage to ambush a single individual, kill him, and retreat before they are discovered. This is considered to be the most desirable outcome of the raid.

722 The women were nervous, frightened, and irritable while the men were away, and they were constantly on the lookout for raiders from other villages. This is always a time to suspect raiders, since allies occasionally turn on their friends when the women are poorly guarded, abducting as many as possible while their husbands are away.

After several days the women were so frustrated and anxious that fights began to break out among them. One woman got angry because another one, her sister and co-wife, left her to tend a small baby. When the mother returned, the angry one picked up a piece of firewood and bashed her on the side of her head with it, knocking her unconscious and causing her ear to bleed profusely.

726 The raiders had been gone almost a week when Kqobawä and his youngest brother staggered into the village, nearly dead from exhaustion. Kqobawä's pains had gotten so bad that he decided to turn back just before they reached the Patanowä-teri village. He could barely walk by that time and would not have been able to elude pursuers should the enemy have given chase. Shararaiwä, his brother, decided to accompany him back lest he run into a group of Patanowä-teri hunters, or his condition grow even more severe. Shortly after they had dropped out of the raiding party, Shararaiwä stepped on a snake and was bitten. The rains had started, and the snakes were beginning to concentrate on the higher grounds, making walking a hazard. His leg began to swell immediately, and he could not walk. Hence, Kqobawä had to carry him out on his back, despite the fact that he could barely walk himself. Carrying him for nearly two days, he managed to reach the Orinoco River. Here, he intended to make a bark canoe and float the rest of

Here, he intended

to make a bark canoe and float the rest of

A SPECIFIC WAR · 133

the way back down, but they located a dugout canoe someone had concealed,³ so they borrowed this and reached home about dark, three days after Shararaiwā had been bitten. He survived the snake bite, but Kaobawā was very exhausted from the trip. 726
[474]
[501]

That night an advance party of the raiders returned, chanted briefly with Kaobawā, explaining that they had reached Patanowā-teri, shot and killed one man, and fled. The Patanowā-teri pursued them, got ahead of them at one point, and ambushed them when they passed. They wounded Konoreiwa of Monou-teri, shooting a bamboo-tipped arrow completely through his chest just above his heart. 727
726

The next morning the main body of raiders returned to the village, carrying Konoreiwa with them in a litter. They had removed the arrow, but he was very weak and continuously coughed up mouthfuls of blood. They put him in a hammock and tended his fire for him. They asked me to treat his wound. 727
[758]
[723]

He lay in his hammock for a week, not eating or drinking all that time—the Yanoamā have a taboo against taking water when wounded with a bamboo-type arrow, and Konoreiwa was slowly wasting away. Finally, I could stand it no longer and made a batch of lemonade. I called for them to gather around, ceremoniously crushed an aspirin into the lemonade, and explained that this was very powerful medicine. So powerful that it had to be diluted with a large amount of water. I then demanded that he take some, which he gladly did, the others not interfering. By then he was so weak that he could not sit up, so I spoon-fed the liquid to him. A knowing glance passed between us as he gulped down the first spoonful of sweet liquid. He ultimately recovered. [758]

The two men who shot the fatal arrows into the Patanowā-teri were both brothers of the slain Damowā. They were killers and had to purify themselves by going through the *unokaimou* ceremony. 727
783
[973]

They were given spaces in Kaobawā's *shabono* for their hammocks. The area each man occupied was sealed off from the adjoining houses by palm leaves, and the men had their food brought to them for the week they were confined to this small area. They each used a pair of sticks to scratch their bodies and did not touch the food with their fingers when they ate, again using sticks to transfer the food from the container to their mouths.

At the end of their confinement, the vine hammocks they used while they were on the raid, along with the scratching sticks, were taken out of the village and tied to a particular kind of tree. The hammocks were placed about 6 feet above the ground and separated from each other by about 1 foot. After this was done, the men resumed their normal activities.

Kaobawā felt that he had satisfied his obligation to avenge Damowā's death. The Monou-teri, however, wanted to prosecute the war further and continue raiding. It was at this point that Paruriwā of Kaobawā's group began to emerge as one of the more prominent men in the village. He stepped forward and actively prosecuted the war against the Patanowā-teri, encouraged by the esteem in which the Monou-teri held him. Still, he was not enthusiastic enough for the Monou-teri. On one raid he subsequently led, he elected to turn back and go home when the Patanowā-teri were not found at their main garden. The Monou-teri insisted that the party should continue on until they 726
701
[921]

³ The canoe was hidden in the brush by Kaobawā's son-in-law, who lives in a village up the Orinoco. He had come to Bizaasi-teri that day to visit and hid his canoe so that the Bizaasi-teri would not borrow it.

he was not enthusiastic about going on the raid, despite the fact that he lectured the younger members of the raiding party about their overt reluctance and cowardice. He was older, however, and had to display the ferocity that adult men are supposed to show. In short, although Hukoshikuwā probably had very little desire as an individual to participate in the raiding, he was obliged to do so by the pressures of the entire system. He could ill afford to remain neutral, as his very own kinsmen—even Kqobawā—implied by word and action that it was disgusting for him not to avenge the death of his brother; and some of his kinsmen in other villages openly accused him of cowardice for not chasing the raiders when they shot Damowā. Again, his erstwhile allies, when they complained about having to feed him and his relatives, were blunt and discourteous. The Shamatarī allies even managed to demand a number of women from Hukoshikuwā's group in payment for girls they had given them earlier, when the Monou-teri were superordinate in the alliance pecking order. In short, if Hukoshikuwā failed to put on a show of ferocity and vindictiveness, it would not be long before his friends in allied villages would be taking even greater liberties and demanding more women. Thus, the system worked against him and demanded that he be fierce. Since his own group was small, it had to protect its sovereignty even more rigorously, or be absorbed by a greedy ally whose protection would be tendered at the price of women.

Hukoshikuwā and his raiders did not locate the Patanowā-teri on this raid, although they searched for over a week. They knew it would be difficult to find them in the rainy season, largely because they would have to take many detours around impassable swamps. It was with this in mind that they brought their larger-than-usual supply of plantains.

The war was still being conducted, but on a lesser scale, when I returned to Monou-teri a year later. They had managed to kill two Patanowā-teri and abduct two women. The Patanowā-teri only killed one Monou-teri, the headman. Hence, the Monou-teri, at least for the time being, came out ahead. The Patanowā-teri will not cease raiding them until they kill at least one more Monou-teri, but then the Monou-teri will be obliged to avenge this death when it occurs.

There will probably be a respite to the raiding because the Patanowā-teri group fissioned and subsequently lost a significant fraction of their numbers. The Monou-teri have completed their move to the new garden and now live there. If the raiding stops, they will be able to live alternatively between their two gardens at any season. Otherwise, they can only occupy their old site in the peak of the wet season. Having two gardens makes them more independent of their allies, and they can again be aggressive in their political dealings with them. Since they have exchanged women with one of their Shamatarī allies and are now living only a half-day's journey from them, they most likely will bind their political fate to the fate of this ally. Their relationships to the two Bisaasi-teri groups, on the other hand, will probably grow cool. Already, the Monou-teri have taken sides with their Shamatarī allies in club fights against the Upper Bisaasi-teri, and they still resent the fact that the Lower Bisaasi-teri forcefully took one of the abducted Patanowā-teri women away from them. Despite the fact that the Monou-teri share a common history and common blood with the two Bisaasi-teri groups, they are now entering into a political situation that frequently leads such related groups to mutual hostilities.

[P. 138 is blank]